Abstract
Sustainable development is a fundamental objective for guaranteeing the future of the planet. Taking into account the impact of emerging economies on the global economy and the scarcity of papers that have considered the effect of CSR initiatives on consumer behavior on those economies, it seems that further research on this issue is necessary. In particular, we analyze the extent to which CSR affects the connection and links of the consumer to the brand (i.e., self-brand connection, brand engagement). The main contribution of the paper to the field is the analysis of the interaction between CSR and branding in the context of an emerging economy. To that aim, and also in a novel way, we use the Stimuli–Organism–Response (SOR) model for a sample of more than 1,000 consumers in Metropolitan Lima, Peru. Our results show that CSR effectively acts as a stimulus for consumers to identify and link to brands and that, in addition, these links generate buy-back (i.e., loyalty) and recommendation behaviors (i.e., WOM) which, in turn, create a great commercial value for companies. This research also analyses how incomes and educational levels moderate the intensity of such links. For practical implications, global trends in managing CSR and branding may be useful, although some cross-cultural and context-specific adaptations are necessary. © 2020 ERP Environment and John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Author keywords
brand engagement  CSR  educational level  emerging economy  sustainability

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